



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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PSSB Weekly Highlights

- Montana Highway Patrol employees Dale Osborne and Ken Foran along with Roger Smith, Lewis & Clark County, resolved an issue at the Sullivan Hill site, which was causing intermittent outages on the USAF's trunking equipment there as well as on the trunked sites at Flying J and Pacific Steel. A faulty lighting arrestor (polyphaser) that was 80-feet up the 100-foot tower was replaced to fix the problem.
- Dunne Communications is finishing up microwave path alignments from Billings to Timberline, including the Coburn, Greeno, Shane Ridge, Greycliff and Red Lodge Mtn. sites.
- An application to re-obligate DHS08 grant funds to Richland County for remaining infrastructure work at the Government Hill site and the eastern microwave project has been completed and is on its way for approval.

FCC Narrowbanding Reminder

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Public safety agencies cannot afford to wait until the last minute to begin or complete the narrowbanding migration process. On Jan. 1, 2013, all public safety and business industrial land mobile radio systems operating in the 150-512 MHz radio bands will have to migrate to 12.5 kHz technology. Most current public safety radio systems use 25 kHz-wide channels. This deadline is the result of a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) effort that began almost two decades ago to ensure more efficient use of radio spectrum and greater spectrum access for public safety and non-public safety users.

This migration to 12.5 kHz efficiency technology—now referred to as narrowbanding—will allow for the creation of additional channel capacity within the same radio spectrum, and support more users. State agencies will be completing their transition to narrowbanding by Oct. 1, 2012. Montana's mutual aid channels will also begin narrowband operation on that date.

Public safety agencies need to continue efforts to budget for equipment replacements and/or

upgrades, which will include equipment inventories to determine if current equipment can be converted or re-programmed to 12.5 kHz. Any radio that cannot be re-programmed to narrowband operation will need to be replaced. Agencies also should verify that they have a current, valid FCC Part 90 license, and add narrowband emissions to it.

After the FCC deadline, licensees not operating at 12.5 KHz efficiency will be in violation of the Commission's rules and could be subject to FCC fines or license suspensions. PSSB will continue to assist Montana agencies in understanding and meeting FCC narrowband requirements. For more information, please visit this website: www.fcc.gov/narrowbanding.

Top 10 Tips for Calling 9-1-1

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov*

A lot of people wonder when to call the 9-1-1 emergency telephone number. It can be confusing, but if you follow these helpful tips, you'll know when to call, how to call, and what to do when you call. Please take a moment to share this information with your family members, too.



1. **Is a person hurt or in danger? Do you need the police, fire or ambulance?** Have you ever wondered whether to call 9-1-1? Since 9-1-1 is for emergencies only, it helps to understand when to call and when not to call. An emergency is any serious situation where a law enforcement officer, fire fighter, or emergency medical help is needed right away. If you are unsure of whether your situation is an emergency, go ahead and call 9-1-1. The 9-1-1 call taker can determine if you need emergency assistance and can route you to the correct location.
2. **If you do call 9-1-1, even by mistake, do not hang up the phone.** Call takers are trained to get the most important information as quickly as possible to get help on the way to an emergency situation. In an emergency situation, allow the call taker to ask you all the questions they need in order to get help there in the timeliest manner before you hang up or leave the phone. If you happen to call by accident, stay on the line until you can tell the call taker that you called by

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accident and there is no emergency. This saves the call taker from having to call you back and confirm there is no emergency or from sending police with lights and sirens to check your address for an emergency.

3. **When calling 9-1-1, do your best to stay calm and answer all questions.** Staying calm can be one of the most difficult, yet most important, things you do when calling 9-1-1. It is very important that you stay as calm as possible and answer all the questions the 9-1-1 call taker asks. Questions that the 9-1-1 call takers ask—no matter how irrelevant they may seem—are important in helping get the first responders to you as fast as possible.
4. **Help the 9-1-1 call taker help you.** Listen and answer the questions asked. By doing this, it helps the call taker understand your situation and will assist you with your emergency until the appropriate police, fire or medical units arrive.
5. **Know the location of the emergency.** The wireless 9-1-1 caller must be aware that the 9-1-1 center that answers the call may not be the 9-1-1 center that services the area that the wireless caller is calling from. Look for landmarks, cross street signs and buildings. Know the name of the city or county you are in. Knowing the location is vital to getting the appropriate police, fire or EMS units to respond. Providing an accurate address is critically important when making a wireless 9-1-1 call.
6. **Teach your children how to call 9-1-1.** Be sure they know what 9-1-1 is, how to dial from your home and cell phone, and to trust the 9-1-1 call taker. Make sure your child is physically able to reach at least one phone in your home. When calling 9-1-1 your child needs to know their name, parent's name, telephone number, and most importantly their address. Tell them to answer all the call takers questions and to stay on the phone until instructed to hang up.
7. **Prank calls to 9-1-1 waste time and are considered to be illegal in most states.** Be sure all members of your household are aware that prank or harassing calls to 9-1-1 will be dealt with by local law enforcement agencies.
8. **Post your address clearly and prominently at your entrance and on your home.** Posting your 9-1-1 address at the driveway entrance and

on your home will alleviate any confusion as to whether emergency responders have the correct location. Try using something reflective or illuminated so that it can be seen in the evening as well as during the day. *Do not assume that since your mailbox is marked, you have posted your address.* Mailboxes are not always at the entrance of a driveway and usually are not marked clearly on both sides. Several cities and counties have ordinances for posting 9-1-1 addresses—check with your local ones. And, always report missing street signs. These not only help others find your home, but are essential for emergency response personnel.

9. **Know the phones you own.** Educate everyone about the phone system in your home as well as your cell phone. Children may need to use the devices in an emergency and will need to know how to operate them.
10. **Helpful 9-1-1 websites for all ages.** Look or search for Public Education pages on any of these websites for additional information about 9-1-1.
 - www.nena.org
 - www.apco911.org
 - www.911.org
 - www.maine911.com/kids
 - www.il911info.org
 - www.denco.org
 - www.911.state.tx.us/kidshome.html

* These tips were originally developed for INVESTIGATIONDISCOVERY.COM by special teams from 911 Lifeline, APCO and NENA.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Thurs., July 21**
I-15/90 Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am - noon
Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Tues., July 26**
State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:30-11:00 am
Mitchell Building, 125 S. Roberts, Rm. 223
- **Thurs., July 28**
Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 10:00 am - noon
Yellowstone Co. EOC/Fire Station
2305 8th Ave. N.